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ABSTRACT

In compliance with Section 204 (C) of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, the Pennyrile Vocational Education Region Two, in Madisonville, Kentucky, developed a formal assessment system to help single parents/displaced homemakers make a realistic choice of curriculum. During the project, assessment instruments were evaluated and purchased, an inservice workshop was provided for guidance counselors and educators from the region's feeder schools, the existing guidance services and area referral service agencies were coordinated with the assessment program, and an advisory committee was appointed to monitor the program. The project for the assessment center evolved into a model that could be modified to serve the needs of single parents/homemakers in most rural areas. (This report contains a synopsis of seven assessment instruments that were evaluated. Each synopsis lists instrument name, describes it, notes the time required to administer it and equipment needed, and the level for which the test is appropriate. Assessment instruments evaluated include the following: Oasis Aptitude and Interest Kits; IDEAS Test Manual and Booklets; "WRIOT" Picture Books and Manuals and Scranton answer documents and forms; Career Decisions Making System; Kuder Occupational Interest Survey; Strong Campbell Vocational Interest Blank; and System for Assessment and Group Evaluation.) (KC)

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BETTER PLACEMENT THROUGH BETTER ASSESSMENT

(A Single Parent/Homemaker Project)

Project Outline

and

Final Report

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FINAL REPORT

BETTER PLACEMENT THROUGH BETTER ASSESSMENT

Vocational Assessment for Single Parents

by

Vada G. Nevels

February-June, 1987

Pennyrile Vocational Education Region 02
Regional Office
Madisonville, Kentucky 42431

Bill M. Hatley, Regional Director
Sarah Davis, Regional Program Coordinator

STEERING COMMITTEE

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Tommy Caskey
Sarah Davis
Jack Ford
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Brenda Stevens
Kay Lancaster
Gail Wyatt
Ruth Quinn
Sally Crenshaw
Margaret Porter

PREFACE

The development of an assessment center for single/parent homemakers is the first part of a two-part grant. The grant was awarded to Pennyrile Vocational Education Region Two as a result of a grant application written by Sarah Davis, Region Two Program Coordinator.

After reviewing the vocational needs of the single parent/homemakers in Region Two, it was concluded that there was a propensity for basing curriculum selection primarily on the basis of informal interest surveys. Students were either told about the choices at the vocational schools or taken on tours of the vocational facility. It was evident that a formal assessment system in combination with the informal surveys would help the students make more realistic choices of vocations. Such procedures would serve as a framework critical to the successful completion of available training programs and eliminate those curriculums in which the student would be likely to experience frustration and failure.

In February 1987, Vada Nevels was employed as a part-time employee to select and purchase appropriate assessment systems, and to coordinate a program that would include existing direct operated personnel in Region Two. The project for the assessment center evolved into a model which could be modified to serve the needs of single parent/homemakers in most rural areas. As Ms. Nevels worked to satisfy the objectives set forth in the Project Proposal she was pleased to make some recommendations for those who are in the process of setting up assessment centers in other regions.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that each individual is important and that each differs in interests, needs, and abilities regardless of race, sex, creed, disadvantage or handicap.

We believe that single parent/homemakers have unique and complex problems that can be addressed, in part, through appropriate vocational training and job placement.

We believe that negative and defeating experiences can be avoided through proper assessment and selection of a curriculum consistent with the ability and level of preparedness of the individual.

We believe in dignity of work and that each individual is entitled to guidance in choosing an appropriate occupation.

We believe that a vocational program geared tot he interests, needs and abilities of each single parent/homemaker will assure success in the workplace and a fuller realization of his/her potential.

We believe that a successful assessment program is dependent upon the cooperation of educators/administrators and that planned staff development activities ensure a thorough understanding of the assessment process and its implications for the instructional program.

PURPOSE

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act has mandated under Title II-A an assessment of interests, abilities and special learning needs of each special needs student with respect to successful completion of a vocational program.

Strategies of this program:

- development and operation of a postsecondary assessment center for the Region.
- selection and purchase of appropriate assessment instruments.
- assessment service for single parent/homemaker in transition.
- inservice for guidance counselors/educators from the Region's feeder schools.
- coordination of the existing guidance services and area referral services agencies.
- appointment of an advisory committee to monitor the program.

OBJECTIVES

Emphasis will be placed upon proper assessment of the adult single/homemaker in order to identify his/her aptitude, interests, and special needs and upon the selection of a curriculum consistent with his/her ability and level of preparedness.

Sex biased and sex stereotyped testing systems will be eliminated to change the vocational education placement of nontraditional students.

Existing guidance services and referral service agencies will be coordinated to implement a postsecondary assessment center that will be consistent with the needs of the single parent/homemaker in Region 02.

Comprehensive evaluation of the existing assessment procedures, materials and instruments will be carried out by the assessment committee before new procedures are implemented and before new materials are purchased.

The project would also schedule inservice meetings for guidance counselors/educators; at which time, they would be advised of the intents and purposes of the assessment center.

BETTER PLACEMENT THROUGH BETTER ASSESSMENT

(1) State the need or problem ----->

(2) Establish tentative objectives for the project
- Research
- Consultation

----->

(3) Determine information needs and sources
- Clients served
- Vocational
- School data

----->

(4) Develop preliminary concept for project
- Philosophy
- Operations
- Services

----->

(5) Plan info collection and use system
- List of resources people & public agencies

----->

(6) Collect info and assessment data
- KY ED Dept. publications
- Public libraries
- Assessment centers

----->

(7) Organize & analyze data

----->

(8) Review selected assessment tools

----->

(9) Assertain needed facilities----->
- equipment
- personnel

(10) Tentative estimate of cost & funds

----->

(11) Submit preliminary plan for review and approval

----->

(12) Review preliminary plan & charges thereto

----->

(13) Complete planning ----->

(14) Prepare detailed budget

----->

(15) Assemble detailed plans

----->

Plan approved

----->

(16) Start implemtation of plans

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Study the Carl D. Perkins Act as it pertains to the assessment of the disadvantaged. Recent passage of the Vocational Education Act has mandated, under Title II A, an assessment of interests, abilities, and special learning needs with respect to successful completion of the vocational program.

2. Become familiar with the "Project Proposal." The "Project Proposal" describes the intent, importance, and relevance of the project to the community and cites some useful statistical data.

3. Accumulate some information about the region, its industries, economy, people, and special needs. Determine, as far as possible, the approximate number of single parent/homemakers who are enrolled in the vocational schools in that region.

4. Identify the agencies in the region that assess single parent/ homemakers and find out something about the kinds of tests that they are using for vocational assessment. If this is done early, it will rule out some of the tests you will consider and prevent overlapping.

5. Surface any tests, other than mandated tests, that are already in place in the region's vocational schools.
6. Pertinent definitions might be kept on file for ready references. One might file definitions for single parent/ homemakers, the disadvantaged, and the handicapped, just to name a few.

7. With all the above information in hand, write the philosophy, purpose, and objectives for the project.

8. Make a "time line." The state has cut-off dates for ordering. Orders over certain amounts must be sent to Frankfort for confirmation. Ascertain those dates and allow plenty of time.

9. Choose a steering committee. The committee should be chosen from counselors/educators who are interested in the project and/or those who are directly involved. All the terms of the project must be agreed upon by that group before it can be implemented.

10. Obtain catalogs from the companies that sell testing, teaching, and training materials. Addresses for the catalog companies may be obtained from counselors, school media centers, and libraries.

11. Continuous efforts must be made to incorporate the ideas of vocational counselors/educators. They often have first hand knowledge of tests that would be useful to the assessor.

12. Set up some criteria for the tests. The criteria chosen will depend upon the population being tested.

13. Keep in mind that the scope of an assessment system that accommodates the single parent/homemaker is enormous. Components must be selected for many handicapping conditions, disadvantages, and reading levels. Tests for health occupations and correctional centers need special consideration.

14. Encouraged by legislation vocational assessment centers have been set up in several regions in Kentucky. Most of the centers, publish reports that contain valuable information. They usually outline referral/assessment procedures, vocational assessment components, and several of the centers offer useful program recommendations.

15. Make appointments to visit vocational assessment centers. The assessors welcome interested parties, and they will often explain their operations and/or arrange for observation.

16. Collect information about the commercially prepared assessments from several sources. The publishers and catalogs offer a substantial amount of data. Combine their information with the informal information gained at the testing centers and with that offered by counselors/educators who have actually used the tests.

17. Plan for a meeting of the steering committee well before the date chosen for ordering the materials. All of the information garnered during the weeks of planning must be communicated to the committee. Summarize the need for each component chosen. Give the name, publisher, description, level, and cost of each test or work sample. Be concise and to the point. These are the people who will be involved with assisting the student and the assessor. Remember a little time spent here can yield positive results later.

18. After the materials for the center have been approved a letter of request must be written for each item. The letters must go to the finance officer for a signature. Orders for items costing $3,000 or more must be sent to Frankfort for a signature.

19. Communications with other agencies who are working with single parent/homemakers should be an on going process. Enlist interagencies cooperation, attend community and church meetings, watch the local newspapers for articles about single parent/ homemakers and vocational assessment projects.

20. Write a precise job description for the vocational assessor. Major consideration should be given as to the length of time needed for testing, scoring, and writing reports. Since the assessment process must interface with vocational school procedures, project services should be clarified and referral

methods need to be clearly articulated. Project goals and the means for their evaluation must be clearly defined and agreed upon by the assessor and the steering committee.

21. Write a final report. Included in the report could be a list of the assessment systems chosen for the center, the vocational assessor's job description, a copy of the project proposal, and the minutes for each meeting of the steering committee.

BETTER PLACEMENT THROUGH BETTER ASSESSMENT

On April 23, 1987, Tommy Caskey, Sarah Davis, Jack Ford, Sally Crenshaw, David Glazebrook, and Margaret Porter, attended a meeting called by B. M. Hatley, Regional Director. The group met for the purpose of reviewing a progress report on a new project initiated by Pennyrile Vocational Education Region 02 in February of this year. "Better Placement Through Better Assessment," designed as a testing center for single parent/homemakers in Region Two will augment the present testing/referral system. The center will receive referrals from vocational counselors/educators in the region and aid them in channeling single parent/homemakers into curriculums where they are most likely to experience success.

As the group considered the plans made for the center, to the date, Vada Nevels suggested several assessment systems that could be used in the center upon their recommendations. The counselors and other members were enthusiastic about the future of the center and they offered several constructive suggestions. The committee examined the tests, considered them to be appropriate, and voted to purchase the systems as presented.

The new assessment center is in compliance with Section 204 (C) (1) of the Carl D. Perkins Act which prescribes "that each disadvantaged student who enrolls in a vocational program shall receive assessment of interests, abilities, and special needs with respect to completing successfully the vocational educational program." The new center will open in the fall.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. Sex equity
2. Reliability
3. Validity
4. Norm Base
5. Durability
6. Portability
7. Flexibility
8. Adaptability
9. Scope
10. Cost
11. Time periods that mesh with the school program
12. Efficiency
13. Ease of administration
14. Ease of maintenance
15. Training requirements for test person
16. Population served

TEST SYNOPSES

ITEMS: OASIS Aptitude Kits
OASIS Interest Kits

DESCRIPTION: The Aptitude survey measures six aptitude factors derived from the GATB. Small group or Individual.

The Interest Schedule measures 12 interest factors identified in USES. Small group or Individual.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS: Each is a pencil and paper test which takes about 30-40 minutes to administer.

LEVEL: Students eighth through twelfth grade reading levels.

ITEMS: "IDEAS" Test Manual and Booklets

DESCRIPTION: Short and easy to score IDEAS quickly identifies interests that can affect educational and vocational direction. Group or Individual.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS: A pencil and paper test. The 112 items appear in a five choice response format.

LEVEL: Students sixth through twelfth grade reading level.

ITEMS: "WRIOT" Picture Books, Manuals Scranton Answer Documents, Report Forms, and Scranton Keys Set.

DESCRIPTION: No reading required. An excellent test for nonreaders. Measures the validity of students interests, stability, and also, maturity of interests are examined.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS: A paper and pencil test. Scores are given in terms of 18 interest clusters.

LEVEL: Five years of age to adult.

ITEMS: "CDM" (Career Decisions Making System)

DESCRIPTION: "CDM" is a systematized approach to career decision making that integrates five major dimensions in choosing a career - abilities, job values, future plans, subject preferences, and interests.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS: A pencil and paper test. The student completes a survey booklet with "Like," "?", or "Dislike" responses to 120 items describing work activities.

LEVEL: Junior and senior high schools and vocational schools.

ITEM: Kuder Occupational Interest Survey

DESCRIPTION: An untimed vocational interest survey that uses job activities rather than job titles. Does not require staff supervision.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS: A paper and pencil test. 100 items with 30-40 minutes testing time.

LEVEL: Grades tenth through adults. May be used for testing the visually impaired for whom other assessments are inappropriate.

ITEMS: "SVIB" (Strong Campbell Vocational Interest Blank)

DESCRIPTION: Used for making educational and occupational choices, exploring lifestyles, making employment decisions, and is an aide in mid-career evaluation and change.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS: A paper and pencil test. No time limit. Typically 25-35 minutes to complete.

LEVEL: High school and colleges.

ITEM: System for Assessment and Group Evaluation (SAGE)

Cost:	$8,420.00
Delivery	150.00
Total	$8,570.00

SUPPLIER: Pesco
21 Pauling Street
Pleasantville, NY 10570
Phone: 1-800-431-2016
ATTN: Bonnie Jones

DESCRIPTION: Tests Interest, Aptitude, Cognitive/Conceptual Abilities, and Work Attitudes.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS: Each test is packaged separately. It is portable. No consumable supplies needed. Answer sheets may be reproduced.

DISADVANTAGED

Definition

Disadvantaged means individuals (other than handicapped) who have academic or economic disadvantages and who require special services and assistance in order to enable them to succeed in vocational education programs. The term includes individuals who are members of economically disadvantaged families, migrants, individuals who have limited English proficiency and individuals who are dropouts, or who are identified as potential dropouts from secondary schools.

According to the proposed regulations for the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, an academically disadvantaged individual is one who scores below the twenty-fifth (25th) percentile on a standardized achievement or aptitude test, whose secondary school grades are below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale (where the grade "A" equals 4.0) or fails to attain minimal academic competencies. This definition does not include individuals with learning disabilities.

"Limited English Proficiency," when used with reference to individuals, means individuals:

-- who were not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English.

-- who come from environments where a language other than English is dominant, or

-- who are American Indian and Alaskan Native students and who come from environments where a language other than English has had a significant impact on their level of English proficiency and

-- who by reason thereof have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny such individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society.

Purposes

One of the purposes of the new Vocational Education legislation, Carl D. Perkins Vocational Act of 1984 (P. L. 980-524) is to provide access to programs, services and activities to individuals who are inadequately served in vocational education programs. In addition to other groups, individuals who are disadvantaged and those who have "Limited English Proficiency" are specifically named in this legislation.

Identification

Records of identification must be on file at the local level for each person identified as disadvantaged and those individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). This information is needed for fiscal accounting purposes. Sample forms for recording the data on identification are provided in Appendix, page 45.

For the academically disadvantaged, records should include data on one or more of the following: standardized or aptitude tests (scores below the twenty-fifth (25th) percentile), academic records (grades are below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale where the grade "A" equals 4.0), and past performance where the student fails to attain minimal academic competencies.

Records to substantiate economically disadvantaged may be as follows:

An economically disadvantaged student is a student who requires special services in order to succeed in vocational education, and who meets one or more of the following:

1. Family income at or below official poverty line established by Director of Management and Budget.

2. Eligible for free or reduced lunch.

3. Eligible for aid to families with dependent children.

4. Eligible for JTPA.

5. Receiving student financial aid based on a need basis for financial assistance.

-- Secondary level: participation in free or reduced lunch program.

-- Postsecondary and adult levels must meet criteria for free lunch and have on file a valid student aid report at the Are Educational Center or State Vocational-Technical School.

Section 204(c)(1) of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act prescribes that "each disadvantaged student who enrolls in a vocational program shall receive assessment of the interests, abilities, and special needs of such student with respect to completing successfully the vocational program." The assessment will be the basis for offering special services tot he disadvantaged and to provide information needed for developing the remediation plan for the disadvantaged, and a sample form is included in the Appendix, page 47.

An individual identified as disadvantaged shall fulfill the following condition:

1. Meets the criteria for classification as disadvantaged as outlined in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984.

2. Is unable, because of academic or economic disadvantages, to succeed in a vocational education program designed for persons without such disadvantages.

Source: Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Vocational Education, Handbook: Planning for Special Populations, Disadvantaged/Handicapped, 1985-86

TEACHER EDUCATOR CONFERENCE

SINGLE PARENT/HOMEMAKERS PROGRAMS IN KENTUCKY

A HOMEMAKER IS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:

- IS AN ADULT, AND
- HAS WORKED AS AN ADULT PRIMARILY WITHOUT RENUMERATION TO CARE FOR THE HOME AND FAMILY AND FOR THAT REASON HAS DIMINISHED MARKETABLE SKILLS.

A SINGLE PARENT IS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:

- IS UNMARRIED OR LEGALLY SEPARATED FROM A SPOUSE, AND
- HAS A MINOR CHILD OR CHILDREN FOR WHICH THE PARENT HAS EITHER CUSTODY OR JOINT CUSTODY.

COMMON NEEDS - MARKETABLE SKILLS

1. FOR FIRST JOB IN LABOR MARKET
2. UPDATE MARKETABLE SKILLS TO GET A BETTER JOB
3. UPDATE MARKETABLE SKILLS TO RE-ENTER THE LABOR MARKET.

Betty Tipton, Director
Equal Vocational Education Program